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Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ADP-00 EURE-00 CIAE-00 PM-07 INR-10

L-03 NSAE-00 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 USIA-12 TRSE-00

MBFR-03 SAJ-01 SS-15 NSC-10 H-02 ACDA-19 IO-13 OMB-01

RSR-01 /138 W
---------- 102267
P R 151904 Z JUN 73
FM AMEMBASSY BONN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5733
INFO SECDEF WASHDC
AMEMBASSY ANKARA
AMEMBASSY ATHENS
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
AMEMBASSY LISBON
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK
AMEMBASSY ROME
USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS
USNMR SHAPE PRIORITY
USMISSION EC BRUSSELS PRIORITY

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 BONN 08600

E. O. 11652; GDS
TAGS: PFOR, NATO. GW
SUBJECT: FRG VIEWS ON DPC MINISTERIAL

REF: A) BONN 7803; B) NATO 2831

SUMMARY: IN THE PAST SEVERAL DAYS, WE HAD THE OPPOR-
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TUNITY TO TOUCH BASE WITH SEVERAL RANKING DEFENSE MINISTRY OFFICIALS, INCLUDING MINISTER LEBER AND ADMIRAL ZIMMERMANN, BUNDESWEHR GENERAL INSPECTOR, ABOUT GERMAN REACTIONS TO THE RECENT DPC MINISTERIAL. WE FOUND THAT DESPITE SECDEF DESIGNATE SCHLESINGER' S ASSURANCES THAT THE US DOES NOT INTEND TO ALTER BASIC NATO STRATEGY, FRG OFFICIALS REMAIN WORRIED THAT WE WANT TO SHIFT TO NEW, BUT AS YET UNSTATED, STRATEGIC PRINCIPLES. HOW DEEPLY THEY HOLD THIS VIEW IS NOT COMPLETELY CLEAR, BUT THERE IS NO QUESTION THAT RECENT DEVELOPMENTS, BOTH IN AND OUTSIDE THE DPC FORUM, HAVE TRIGGERED GERMAN CONCERNS TO THE POINT WHERE WE SHOULD CONSIDER SOME MOVE TO COUNTERACT THEM. END SUMMARY.

1. ADMIRAL ZIMMERMANN AND ADMIRAL TREBESCH (DEFMIN POL/ MIL CHIEF), AS WELL AS FONOFF NATO SECTION, TOLD EMBOFF THAT THE FRG WARMLY WELCOMED SECDEF SCHLESINGER' S REAFFIRMATION THAT WE WILL MAINTAIN THE CURRENT LEVEL US FORCES IN EUROPE UNTIL A BALANCED FORCE REDUCTION AGREEMENT IS CONCLUDED. THEY SAID, HOWEVER, THAT DEFMIN LEBER AND OTHER FRG OFFICIALS THOUGHT SCHLESINGER' S APPRAISAL OF NATO DEFENSE CAPABILITY WAS FAR TOO OPTIMISTIC, PARTICULARLY WHEN COMPARED TO THE MC INTELLIGENCE ESTIMATE, WHICH, IN THEIR VIEW, PRESENTED A MORE ACCURATE PICTURE OF THE NATO- WP MILITARY BALANCE IN THE CENTER REGION. THEY CONCEDED THAT THERE ARE AMPLE GROUNDS FOR REASONABLE DIFFERENCES OF OPINION ABOUT THE MILITARY BALANCE, BUT WHAT BOTHERED THEM IS THAT SCHLESINGER' S STATEMENT COINCIDED WITH THE APPEARANCE OF THE WASHINGTON POST ARTICLE DISCLOSING A PENTAGON STUDY UPGRADING THE STRENGTH OF NATO FORCES RELATIVE TO WP FORCES. THEY COULD NOT HELP BUT QUESTION WHETHER THIS STUDY WAS THE BASIS FOR THE OPTIMISTIC SCHLESINGER PRESENTATION. DESPITE OUR EXPLANATIONS THAT THE ONGOING DOD STUDY IS INCOMPLETE AND HAS NO OFFICIAL STATUS, THEY WERE SURPRISED WITH THE SUDDENNESS WITH WHICH A NEW US ESTIMATE OF NATO CAPABILITY COULD BE SURFACED, AND THEY WERE PERPLEXED HOW THE US POSITION ON SO VITAL A POINT AS THE MILITARY BALANCE WITH CENTRAL REGION COULD VARY SO GREATLY FROM NATO' S. THEY, AND MINISTER LEBER, ARE ESPECIALLY WARY OF AN EASY ACCEPTANCE OF THE SCHLE-

SINGER' S ESTIMATE, BECAUSE IT WOULD UNDERCUT THE EFFORTS OF THOSE EUROPEANS WHO ARE TRYING TO BEEF- UP THEIR MILITARY FORCES, PARTICULARLY IF IT BECAME WIDELY ACCEPTED BY EUROPEAN PUBLIC OPINION AS THE TRUE STATE OF THE MILITARY BALANCE. THEY FRANKLY FEAR THE IMPLICATIONS A ROSY ESTIMATE OF THE EAST- WEST BALANCE WOULD HAVE ON PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR DEFENSE MEASURES.

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2. HOWEVER, A MORE SERIOUS RESULT OF THE DPC MINISTERIAL APPEARS TO BE THAT THE GERMANS HAVE TAKEN A LONG STEP TOWARD BELIEVING WE HAVE ALREADY DECIDED TO SWITCH FROM THE 14/3 STRATEGY. MINISTER LEBER, WE UNDERSTAND, HAD PRIVATELY EXPRESSED HIS PERSONAL CONCERN ALONG THIS LINE. MOREOVER, ZIMMERMANN, TREBESCH AND THE FONOFF NATO DESK STAFF POINT TO SEVERAL DEVELOPMENTS WHICH POINT IN QUITE THE OPPOSITE DIRECTION.

3. IN THEIR VIEW, THE PRESIDENT' S 1973 FOREIGN POLICY REPORT SUGGESTED A SERIOUS QUESTIONING OF CURRENT STRATEGIC DOCTRINE, A POINT WE DISCUSSED IN REF A. THIS ASSUMPTION ON THE PART OF THE GERMANS HAD NOT BEEN REMOVED BY SCHLESINGER' S ASSURANCES IN THE DPC TO THE

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L-03 NSAE-00 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 USIA-12 TRSE-00

MBFR-03 SAJ-01 SS-15 NSC-10 H-02 ACDA-19 IO-13 OMB-01

RSR-01 AEC-11 AECE-00 /149 W
---------- 102294
P R 151904 Z JUN 73
FM AMEMBASSY BONN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5734
INFO SECDEF WASHDC
AMEMBASSY ANKARA
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AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
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CONTRARY. IN PART, THIS IS THE RESULT OF OTHER EVENTS. THE APPEARANCE OF ALLEGATIONS CONCERNING US DEVELOPMENT OF MINI- NUCLEAR WEAPONS WHICH COINCIDED WITH THE PUBLICATION OF THE FOREIGN POLICY REPORT, GAVE RISE TO QUESTIONS HERE ABOUT THE IMPLICATIONS SUCH WEAPONS WOULD HAVE FOR

FRG INTERESTS AND NATO STRATEGIC POLICY, PARTICULARLY AS TO WHETHER THE US WOULD WANT TO USE THESE WEAPONS IN PLACE OF CONVENTIONAL FORCES IN A NEW STRATEGIC CONCEPT. FINALLY, WHEN THE SCHLESINGER PRESENTATION, WHICH SUGGESTED TO THE GERMANS THAT NATO FORCES ARE MORE THAN ADEQUATE FOR THEIR ROLE, COINCIDED WITH THE APPEARANCE OF THE WASHINGTON POST STORY, THE IMPRESSION WAS CREATED AMONG A WIDE CIRCLE OF FRG DEFENSE OFFICIALS THAT THE US INTENDS AN IMPORTANT SHIFT AWAY FROM 14/3 STRATEGY.

4. WE DO NOT WISH TO DRAMATIZE THE NATURE OF THE CONCERNS WHICH WE HAVE HEARD, BUT IT IS CLEAR THAT A JUNCTURE OF DEVELOPMENTS HAS CREATED UNEASINESS AMONG RANKING FRG DEFENSE OFFICIALS ABOUT US INTENTIONS WITH RESPECT TO NATO DEFENSE STRATEGY. WE DO NOT KNOW HOW DEEP THIS UNEASINESS IS OR WHETHER GERMAN OFFICIALS HAVE IN FACT MADE UP THEIR MINDS ON THE MATTER. HOWEVER, ADMIRAL ZIMMERMANN, THE BUNDESWEHR' S TOP- RANKING MILITARY LEADER, TOLD AN EMBOFF THAT HE IS NOW CONVINCED THAT WE HAVE DECIDED TO SEEK A SHIFT IN NATO DEFENSE DOCTRINE IN A WAY SIMILAR TO THAT WHICH OCCURRED IN THE EARLY 1960 S. ZIMMERMANN IS A HIGHLY- PERCEPTIVE AND WELL- BALANCED THINKER WHO PLAYED AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN STRATEGY THINKING FOR THE FRG AT THAT TIME. THAT HE CAN CONCLUDE THAT A SHIFT IN US DEFENSE THINKING HAS OCCURRED IS AN INDICATION HOW RECENT EVENTS MAY HAVE MISLED GERMAN OFFICIALS.

5. IN FURTHER DISCUSSIONS WITH FONOFF AND MOD OFFICIALS WE WILL MAKE USE OF THOSE PARTS OF SCHLESINGER' S PRESENTATION AT THE DPC, WHICH STATED OUR ADHERENCE TO THE BASIC PRINCIPLES OF NATO STRATEGY AND PRESENTED DETAILED US VIEWS ON VARIOUS NATO ISSUES. NEVERTHELESS, GIVEN

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THE IMPORTANCE OF THESE MATTERS AND THE POTENTIAL THEY HAVE TO CAUSE MISCHIEF IN OUR RELATIONS WITH THE FRG, WE WOULD APPRECIATE ANY ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE THAT THE DEPARTMENT OR DOD MIGHT GIVE US. AS MATTERS NOW STAND, A SUBSTANTIAL PART OF THE FRG DEFENSE POLICY ESTABLISHMENT PROFESSES TO BE UNCLEAR ABOUT OUR IDEAS AND WHAT WE HAVE IN MIND IN WHAT TO THEM SEEMS TO BE A MOVE TOWARDS REDEFINITION OF NATO DOCTRINE. FRG SENSITIVITY ABOUT NUCLEAR WEAPONS AND POSSIBLE CHANGES IN STRATEGIC

DOCTRINE IS WELL KNOWN. THE GERMANS ALSO APPARENTLY FEEL THEY SHOULD BE CUT INTO OUR PLANNING OR LONG- RANGE STUDIES AT AN EARLIER STAGE SO AS TO BE BETTER AWARE OF MORE OF THE RAMIFICATIONS OF US THINKING ABOUT DEFENSE STRATEGIES. IN OTHER WORDS, WE APPEAR TO HAVE A COMMUNICATIONS GAP HERE AND WE SHOULD MOVE TO CORRECT IT ASAP. WE ARE REPORTING SEPARATELY A CONVERSATION BETWEEN AMBASSADOR ELLSWORTH AND DEFENSE STATE SECRETARY BERKHAN IN WHICH THE LATTER SUGGESTED THAT CLARIFICATION OF THESE QUESTIONS IS NOW NECESSARY.
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